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February 20, 2015

Lt. Governor Newsom Assumes Chair of State Lands Commission, Calls for Strategic Plan

Technology, transparency, and the environment central to first strategic plan in 18 years

(Sacramento) –Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom assumed Chairmanship of California’s State Lands Commission today, vowing to bring a twenty-first century focus to a commission that hasn’t developed a strategic plan in over eighteen years. The State Lands Commission oversees the management, leasing and protection of millions of acres of state-owned lands and resources under its jurisdiction.

“Needless to say, a strategic plan is long overdue and it is critically important for the Commission to identify priorities within limited resources to protect, promote and enhance the state’s valuable public trust and school land resources,” said Lieutenant Governor Newsom. “The Commission must leverage technology to manage the state’s lands and resources in a more transparent and efficient way to improve project timeliness, customer service, and revenue generation.”

Lt. Governor Newsom stated that the overall goal of strategic plan should ensure transparency in the Commission’s practices and operations, provide the highest level of safety and environmental protection for the lands and resources under the Commission’s jurisdiction, ensure current and future uses of sovereign lands are consistent with public trust principles and values, and maximize returns in the use and development of state lands and resources.

In asking staff to return to the Commission’s June meeting with a proposal for the Commission’s consideration, the Lt. Governor specified that the Commission should leverage technology, encourage and facilitate the development of renewable energy facilities, and develop and implement an investment plan for the approximately \$60 million in the School Land Bank fund.

In addition to the strategic plan, the Lt. Governor asked the Commission to incorporate the impacts of sea level rise and climate change, greenhouse gas reductions, and litter and marine debris within its project analyses and reviews.

Background – California State Lands Commission

The California Legislature established the State Lands Commission as an independent commission in 1938, as a result of criminal trials of senior staff of the Surveyor-General's that stemmed from corruption in the issuance of mineral leases and land transactions. The Commission is comprised of three members: the Lieutenant Governor, the State Controller, and the Governor's Director of Finance. Chairmanship rotates between the State Controller and Lieutenant Governor.

The California State Lands Commission serves the people of California by providing stewardship of the lands, waterways, and resources entrusted to its care through economic development, protection, preservation, and restoration. A primary function of the Commission is to issue leases and contracts for the use of the state's property and resources. While the Commission has some regulatory functions, principally it is a land and resource management agency, not a regulatory agency.

Separately, the Legislature has provided that the Commission has regulatory authority over marine oil terminals for the prevention of oil spills and the introduction of invasive species in California waters.

The Commission is led by an Executive Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day business of the Commission. The Commission has a staff of more than 200 including specialists in mineral resources, land management, boundary determination, petroleum engineering and the natural sciences.

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